



Interim Guidance for Indoor and Outdoor Venues for Live Performances (April 7, 2021)

Guidelines for Indoor and Outdoor Small & Medium Size Venues: Any scenario in which many people gather together poses a risk for COVID-19 transmission. All businesses and agencies where groups of people gather in an enclosed space should create and implement a plan to minimize the opportunity for COVID-19 transmission at their facility. The guidance below will help venues- like arenas and music halls- reduce the spread of COVID-19 in their communities.

In addition to the requirements below, certain businesses **must follow** Closure Periods or Stay at Home Orders, when they are in effect. For more information on any requirements that are currently in effect and how this applies to your business, please visit [Business Closure Periods and Stay at Home Restrictions](#).

This guidance covers the following topics:

- Social Distancing and Minimizing Exposure
- Cloth Face Coverings
- Cleaning and Hygiene
- Monitoring for Symptoms
- Protecting Vulnerable Populations
- Combatting Misinformation
- Water and Ventilation Systems
- Additional Resources

Social Distancing and Minimizing Exposure

[Social distancing](#) is one of the only tools we currently have to decrease the spread of COVID-19. Social distancing (“physical distancing”) means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home. Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from other people; do not gather in groups; stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings.

Venues are required to:

- For indoor and outdoor venues, limit occupancy to 50% of the stated fire capacity. For spaces without a stated fire capacity, the limit on guests is 12 per 1,000 square feet AND ensure sufficient social distancing with guests at least 6-feet apart.
- Workers or any other support staff do not count toward these capacity limits.
- Require that all patrons be seated.

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- Ensure social distancing by arranging tables and seating to achieve at least 6-foot separation between parties.
- Provide floor markings to help customers stay 6 feet apart in concession lines, ticket counters, restroom lines, and other areas where people gather, including if they are waiting outdoors due to limits on indoor capacity.
- Follow [NCDHHS Interim Guidance for Retail](#) if opening gift shops and follow [NCDHHS Interim Guidance for Restaurants](#).
- Post the reduced "Emergency Maximum Capacity" at each entrance to the facility. Also, post the reduced "Emergency Maximum Occupancy" at each door to a room or suite. [Sign templates](#) are available in English and Spanish on NC DHHS COVID-19 response site.
- Post signage throughout the venue, including entrances and exits and concessions, reminding attendees and staff about social distancing (staying at least 6 feet away from others). [Know Your W's](#) sign templates are available in English and Spanish on the NC DHHS COVID-19 response site.
- In addition to the above requirements, **indoor venues with more than 5,000 seated capacity and outdoor venues with a more than 10,000 seated capacity** must use assigned seats as follows:
 - All events must be ticketed. No tickets shall be sold for "standing room only" or "general admission."
 - The facility operator must, through the use of assigned seating, ensure that each group of Guests attending the event is actually physically separated by six (6) feet from each Guest in each other group.
 - This includes not only separating each Guest group horizontally within a row, but also separating Guest groups vertically between rows so that no person has someone from another group within six (6) feet in front or behind them.
 - The facility operator must have staff periodically monitor crowds to ensure that Guests do not take seats other than their assigned seats.

It is recommended that venues:

- Clearly mark designated entry and exit points.
- Clearly mark stairwells, walkways, and other areas of entering/exiting to separate people and reduce close contact to the extent possible. In waiting areas and other areas where people may be standing and waiting, install partitions between entrances and exits and other areas to limit close contact.
- Make walkways or stairways one-way or clearly divided for bi-directional travel.
- Install plexiglass or other barriers at ticket counters, information desks, and other areas to limit contact between customers and workers. Physical barriers do not replace face coverings.
- Limit capacity in restrooms, elevators, and other enclosed areas to accommodate social distancing.
- Use smart phone apps, online reservations and electronic payment or other method to limit contact between customers and workers.
- Use timed entry for tickets to reduce number of people entering facility at the same time.
- Alternate check-in lines and ticket queue areas to increase social distancing when possible.
- Assign people seats that are evenly distributed throughout venue

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- Assign people set entrance and exits, restrooms, concession stands based on their ticketed seat to maintain even distribution of people throughout the venue.
- Update bag policy and other security measures to facilitate distancing for security staff. Use touchless methods for metal detection and item checks and implement policy for pat downs or other close contact security checks to protect workers.
- Discontinue use of concession workers walking through the seating area to sell concessions directly to reduce close contact.
- Cohort workers to the extent possible, allowing employees to work in the same concession, ticket, gate, or other areas to reduce the amount of cross contact between employees.

Cloth Face Coverings

There is evidence that wearing a face covering can help reduce the spread of COVID-19, especially because people may be infected with the virus and not know it.

Venues are **required** to:

- Have all employees, volunteers and concession workers wear a face covering unless the worker states that an exception applies.
- Have all patrons wear a face covering when they are inside the establishment, unless customer states that an exception applies or they are actively eating or drinking.
- Make good-faith efforts to provide to workers either a one-week supply of reusable face coverings or a new disposable face covering each day.
- New face coverings should be provided during the work day if the worker's face covering becomes soiled, torn, or wet.
- Visit NC DHHS [COVID-19 response site](#) for more information about the face covering [guidance](#) and access sign templates that are available in English and Spanish.

It is recommended that venues:

- Provide disposable face coverings to customers to wear while in the establishment.

Cleaning and Hygiene

Washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or using hand sanitizer reduces the spread of transmission.

Venues are **required** to:

- Promote frequent use of hand washing and hand sanitizer for staff and individuals. Require handwashing of staff immediately upon reporting to work, after contact with individuals, after performing cleaning and disinfecting activities, and frequently throughout the day.
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) at the entrance, and any other areas throughout premises as needed.
- Perform ongoing and routine environmental cleaning and disinfection of high-touch areas (e.g., doors, doorknobs, rails) with an [EPA approved disinfectant for SARS-CoV-2](#) (the virus that causes COVID-19), and increase disinfection during peak times or high customer density times.

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It is recommended that venues:

- Systematically and frequently check and refill hand sanitizers throughout the day or event and assure soap and hand drying materials are available at all sinks.
- Provide tissues for proper cough and sneeze hygiene.
- Develop and implement plan for disinfection of restrooms and concession areas. Disinfection should follow [Interim Guidance for Safe Application of Disinfectants](#) and should take into consideration appropriate contact time for disinfectant to work properly.
- Provide additional trash receptacles to accommodate additional use of single service eating and drinking utensils and disposable personal protective equipment (PPE). Plan for additional trash removal during operating hours.

Monitoring for Symptoms

Staff should be encouraged to self-monitor for symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath.

If they develop symptoms, they should notify their supervisor and return home. More information on [how to monitor for symptoms](#) is available from the CDC.

Venues are **required** to:

- Have a plan in place for immediately removing employees from work if symptoms develop. Employees who have symptoms when they arrive at work or become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, and visitors and sent home or to their healthcare provider.
- Post signage at the main entrance requesting that people who have been symptomatic with fever and/or cough not enter, such as [Know Your Ws/Stop if You Have Symptoms](#) flyers (English - [Color](#), [Black & White](#); Spanish - [Color](#), [Black & White](#)).

It is recommended that venues:

- Establish and enforce sick leave policies to prevent the spread of disease, including:
 - Enforcing employees staying home if sick.
 - Encouraging liberal use of sick leave policy.
 - Expanding paid leave policies to allow employees to stay home when sick.
- [Per CDC guidelines](#), if an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is presumed positive by a medical professional due to symptoms, the employee should be excluded from work until:
 - No fever for at least 24 hours since recovery (without the use of fever-reducing medicine) AND
 - Other symptoms have improved (e.g., coughing, shortness of breath) AND
 - At least 10 days have passed since first symptoms***A test-based strategy is no longer recommended to discontinue isolation or precautions and employers should not require documentation of a negative test before allowing a worker to return.**
- [Per CDC guidelines](#), if an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 but does not have symptoms, they should remain out of work until 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test.

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- Require symptomatic employees, volunteers and concession workers to wear cloth face coverings until leaving the facility. Cleaning and disinfecting procedure should be implemented by designated personnel following [CDC guidelines](#) once sick employee leaves.
- Provide employees with information on help lines to access information or other support in reference to COVID-19, e.g. 211 and Hope4NC Helpline (1-855-587-3463).

Venues can consider:

- Conducting daily [symptom](#) screening (use the standard interview questionnaire [English](#) | [Spanish](#)) of employees at entrance to workplace with immediately sending symptomatic workers home to [isolate](#).

Protecting Vulnerable Populations

Information on who is at higher risk for severe disease is available from the [CDC](#) and [NCDHHS](#).

It is recommended that venues:

- Designate a specific time for persons at higher risk to access the event, activity, or facility without the general population (such as early morning, or late afternoon).
- Enable employees to self-identify as high risk for severe disease and reassign work to minimize face-to-face contact and to allow them to maintain a distance of six feet from others, or to telework if possible.

Combatting Misinformation

Help make sure that the information your employees is getting is coming directly from reliable resources. Use resources from a trusted source like the [CDC](#) or [NCDHHS](#) to promote behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19.

It is recommended that venues:

- Provide workers with education about COVID-19 strategies, using methods like videos, webinars, or FAQs. Some reliable sources include [NC DHHS COVID-19](#), [Know Your W's: Wear, Wait, Wash](#), [NC DHHS COVID-19 Latest Updates](#), [NC DHHS COVID-19 Materials & Resources](#)
- Promote informational helplines like 211 and Hope4NC and other [Wellness Resources](#).
- Put up signs and posters, such as those found [Know Your W's: Wear, Wait, Wash](#) and those found [Social Media Toolkit for COVID-19](#).

Water and Ventilation Systems

Reduced use of water and ventilation systems can pose their own health hazards. There is increased risk for Legionella and other waterborne pathogens from stagnant or standing water.

Before opening, it is recommended that venues:

- Follow the CDC's [Guidance](#) for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation to minimize the risk of diseases associated with water.
- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and as feasible direct air outside, and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, or other methods. Do not open windows and doors if they pose a safety or health risk to people using the facility.

Additional Resources

- CDC: [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#)
- CDC: [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): [Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](#)
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA): [Food Safety and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA): [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security: [Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce](#)



**Staying apart brings us together.
Protect your family and neighbors.**

Learn more at nc.gov/covid19.



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